

## Letter from Alexander Graham Bell to Mabel Hubbard Bell, undated, with transcript

ALEXANDER GRAHAM BELL TO MABEL (Hubbard) BELL Hotel Wagram, Paris.  
Saturday. (probably Dec. 1877 or certainly winter of 77–8) My sweet darling May:

I have been thinking of you all this evening and wishing I could see you or hear from you or of you — to assure me that you are better than when I saw you last. My head is quite sore with the self-denunciatory rape I have been giving it — when I think of my heartlessness to you the other night. To leave you as I did and lie out on the stairs — I hate myself — you dear sweet pet! Please forgive me.

I only hope I have not made you ill. Don't forget — in your letters to say how you are.

I reached Charing Cross Station last night in good time — and tried to secure a second-class compartment — so as to be able to lie down. But I was fated to have companions for just as we were starting — a gentleman came bounding into the carriage — a second edition of my cousin Sam — so far as outward appearance went — but not so refined and gentlemanly — This individual — who evidently belonged (interiorly) to the “Hail-fellow-well-met” school — looked as if he wanted to embrace me — and asked in the most genial manner if I smoked — to which I replied that I occasionally did when travelling. Upon this he produced from the interior recesses of his carpet bag — a number of articles which he laid out upon the seat — a well-filled cigar case — a box of matches — a bottle of whiskey, a flask of brandy, a small tumbler, a packet of sandwiches, some biscuits, a pair of brushes, a comb, and a looking-glass.

He “approved of being comfortable” — and “wanted every one else to be” and asked me to help myself.

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“Just a leetle drop of whiskey! or do I prefer brandy?” His sandwiches are at my disposal — Won't I take one. “No thank you” -“I never drink — and I have just had dinner” — Well — a cigar just for company” so a cigar I had to take — while he took his sip of brandy all by himself. After which he became quite communicative upon the subject of travelling — and exhibited a wonderful knowledge of the Continent and of the way to reach different places.

At the next station another occupant entered the carriage — a man of the Commercial traveller stamp — who seemed to be nothing but one vast black beard from the midst of which proceeded a sepulchral voice — “No thank you — I don't smoke and I am not hungry — yes I don't mind if I do try a little whiskey.” Friend number 1 had thought it necessary to disgorge once more the contents of his carpet-bag and the two took a leetle dram together — and soon became “thick” with one another. This gave me the opportunity of relapsing into silence and I was soon stretched out upon my seat with my head pillowed upon my valise and well wrapped up in your shawl.

From the conversation — I soon gathered the facts that Friend No. 2 was a commercial traveller on his way to “Dunkirk” — and that Friend No. 1 was a guide — traveling with a Mr. Delane and his brother.

Mr. Delane he stated was one of the Editors of the Times and had five months vacation on account of his health — as he was suffering from Bright's Disease.

We left London enveloped in a fog — but a few miles out of London the air grew clear and the whole country looked beautiful in the moon-light.

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At Dover we found the steamer in waiting to receive us and the mail. I never saw before — as many sacks of letters — I should say roughly that there must have been as many as two hundred bags of letters and etc., on board. The channel was as smooth as a mill-

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pond and we had a rapid and pleasant voyage across. We reached Calsis about half-past twelve o'clock and — as we had half an hour to wait — I had an opportunity of airing my french in the Refreshment-room.

“Garcon, Garcon” — “Oui- Monsieur,” — “Cafe au lait et paiu et beurre” — and I was soon supplied with all I wanted. I cannot yet manage the French money with any degree of expedition — so I find it my best plan in paying — to give a coin that I know to be too much and trust to the waiter's bringing back the correct change.

Of course I look wisely at the change as though I were counting it and in this way often succeed in concealing my ignorance.

I reached Paris at about half-past six o'clock this morning and drove to the Hotel Wagram and at once went to bed — only waiting to send a brief note to Mr. Roosevelt announcing my arrival.

It is now half-past one in the morning and I am tired and sleepy so I shall say goodnight.

Your loving, Alec.